1: Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SOS Timbira SOS

yarkwá festivals. On these occasions they assemble in a special house lying toward the north on the eastern half of the circumference. However, the Clowns may also be seen singly or in small groups on many other occasions, even in everyday situations; but they withdraw from all the more serious and solemn ceremonials.

In their public performances the Clowns are distinguished by their grotesque make-up as to paint, ornaments, and other paraphernalia; and their behavior is correspondingly absurd. They affect a ridiculous gait and mien and deceive the villagers by harmless lies and false alarms without evoking resentment.

For example, when a boy's ear lobes are pierced, his maternal uncle kills a deer on some unspecified day, dissects it, packs the slices into a basket, and furtively carries this to the plaza. No sooner have the women caught sight of him than they dash out of their houses with knives in order to snatch off a piece of meat in the general scrimmage. One morning when this episode had been due for several days there finally loomed a figure at daybreak that ran toward the plaza carrying a load, which it hurriedly deposited before taking to its heels. At once the women and girls rushed over with yells, fell upon the basket pell-mell, and tore it open, each trying to seize as much as she could of its contents. But this proved to consist of straw, rotten wood, rusty tin cans, and a few rocks. Not only the Clowns, but the whole village laughed at the women standing flabbergasted before their "booty" with their knives and finally they themselves joined in the general merriment.

At certain house-to-house processions the Clowns try to steal food and are sometimes beaten by the women, to everyone's amusement.

At pepkahą'k four of them, with their two girl auxiliaries, enter with face masks of *Lagenaria* rind.

However, the ceremonial activities of the Clowns, as well as of the other organizations are best considered in the description of the festivals.

The Hąmrén

This honorific order comprises five otherwise unrelated groups which share public esteem and ceremonial eminence: (1) the village chiefs (pa'hí); (2) the leaders (mamkyẽ'ti) of the age classes; (3) those girls who are associated with the boys during their initiation ceremony and are called pepkwẽ'i after the close of the initiation; (4) the women's precentresses (mehõkrepúi); (5) the King Vultures (tamhą'k). Because of the numerical preponderance of the last-named group over the others combined, the term hąmrén is often used as a synonym for tamhą'k; properly it means "recovered from illness."

The first three groups of functionaries are appointed by the council on the basis of personal fitness. This also determines the choice of a precentress, but she is usually selected by the girl's family.

Notwithstanding the respect accorded to the hąmrén, they are not coextensive with the persons of distinction, for the councilmen, who (with the chiefs) rule the tribe and are always approached reverentially with a bowlful of food, are by no means hąmrén *as* councilors, but only through special circumstances. Similarly, the precentor, though far more important than his female colleague, is never hąmrén ex officio.

The natives link the concept of hąmrén with that of something special, superior, more refined, so that they are somewhat distinct from the rest of the population. The head of the King Vultures compared them to the "doutores" of Neobrazilian rustics, who apply the term to all intellectuals, superior officials, etc., irrespective of academic rank. By contrast all other residents are classed as mekakránkra (me,

1: Nimuendaju E-8 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

778 554 [784] personal prefix; kakrán, unripe; kra, people). This term does not suggest social immaturity, but brings out the point that the mekakránkra may eat unripe fruit while for the hąmrén all that is not completely mature is taboo. Further, a hąmrén never eats of the first part of a crop lest he be attacked by snakes or other venomous beasts. A hąmrén who should taste of a green gourd would be afflicted with wounds on his body; in gathering honey he must not eat it directly from the bees' nest, but must first put it on a gourd bowl, otherwise he would be likely to get injured by stepping on the stump of a tree. He would incur the same risk if he were to carve implements, such as clubs or arrowheads, from pau roxo wood in the plaza, where men frequently work manually during the meetings held there. The "unripe people" are immune to such perils.

Because of the above-mentioned confusion of the words hąmrén and tambą'k I am not clear how many of the numerous restrictions which hedge in the King Vultures apply to the whole order. In any case the taboos listed suggest that a hąmrén is invested with a superior bodily sensitiveness.

778 554 766 Formerly all the hąmrén had a distinctive mode of burial, a custom only partly maintained at present. Properly, the corpse of a hąmrén (and none other) has falcon down glued on it; and the interment takes place not behind the deceased person's maternal home, but in front of it, on the inner margin of the boulevard. Finally, secondary burial was confined to this order, though conceivably this was once the rule for all, but persisted for the hąmrén when it had long lapsed for the rest of the people.

778 554 171 Outside the Canella I have encountered nothing at all suggestive of this hąmrén institution except among the Kaingang in the Rio Ivahy district (state of Paraná). Here there are at least three classes (p. 82 f.)—paí, votóro, and péñye, the first ranking highest (cf. Guarani: paí, a person of prestige) and comprising the chiefs. It enjoys ceremonial prerogatives, such as sitting on a white caraguatá blanket; and is credited with peculiar sensitiveness to noxious influences. For that reason, the chief Vegmõ' told me, he had bestowed on his naturally feeble son a péñye rather than a paí name. These classes have distinctive duties in the cult of the dead. A father may assign his child to whatever class he pleases, its affiliation being symbolized by the name it bears. Unfortunately my data are very imperfect. According to Hoerhan, the Botocudo of Santa Catharina—closely related to the Kaingang, though not identical with them—have some comparable institution (p. 83).

Of the first four of my hąmrén categories, the chiefs are best considered under the head of Government, the others in connection with the discussion of ceremonialism.

794 As for the King Vultures, I at first mistook them for an ordinary men's society, for at certain dances and log races their behavior hardly differs from that of the Ducks or Falcons. But soon I recognized them as a wholly distinct type of unit, seeing that they are *ipso facto* hąmrén, in fact, form the bulk of the order. Further, while the societies figure ceremonially only at certain definite festive periods and in a markedly dramatic fashion, the King Vultures have permanent functions of pronouncedly magical and social significance. Finally, they are without girl associates.

794 825 The word tambą'k is a synonym for kukriti (king vulture [*Gypagus papa*]), with whom the members claim kinship, designating him as kedti (maternal uncle). However, they do not in any way worship or revere this bird, nor do they make ceremonial use of its feathers or parts of its body. As the king vulture makes food available to the ordinary black vultures (by tearing open the carrion against which their weak bills are impotent), so a King Vulture feeds others.

1: Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

Membership is not transferred from maternal uncle to sister's son, but goes with the honorary chieftainship of an alien Timbira tribe. When one Timbira group visits another, the hosts glue falcon down on one of the guests, preferably a young man, paint him with urucú, and make him present himself before the councilors in the plaza with a bowlful of food. By this rite he becomes their honorary chief, mehõpa'hí, which is reckoned a great distinction. This ceremony always takes place shortly before sunset, the time when the girls are singing and the elders assembling in the plaza. At a return visit to their erstwhile guests, the former hosts look up the man thus chosen, who billets them on his mother or wife or both, charging himself with their entertainment.

In 1930 Vicente Kratpẽ', the chief of the Krahõ', who had incurred the animosity of the Apinayé, made an offer of peace and amity through me. In dictating the message to me, he explicitly referred to their having appointed his son a courtesy chief and urged them to visit their mehõpa'hí.[100] In 1931 the Guajajára paid their first visit to the Rąmkõ'kamekra, who chose one of their young men as honorary chief. He was probably little pleased with the consequences of his elevation, for henceforth whole bands of Rąmkõ'kamekra would descend upon him for continuous and prolonged visits.

In short, it is an honorary chief's duty to provide food for the members of the tribe by which he has been honored. Of the four tribal groups united at Ponto—the predominant Rąmkõ'kamekra, the Čą'kamekra, the Krõ'rekamekra, and the Karẽkateye—each has one or more of these courtesy chiefs in each of the others—the more, the better in the interest of their food supply. It is the totality of these courtesy chiefs, who in 1931 numbered thirty-four, that constitutes the order of King Vultures; and since the tribal chiefs are hąmrén, the title is extended likewise to the tamhą'k.

This is the only way of becoming a King Vulture. It does happen frequently that as a man grows older his electors choose his sister's son as successor to his aging uncle because youth is deemed essential for the magical practices of the order. But the specific relationship is inessential. In one case a son was appointed to supersede his father, and other youths were chosen though neither their fathers nor their uncles had ever been tamhą'k. This principle applies also to the post of leader of the order.

Adopted by a Čą'kamekra family, I am classed accordingly in the village. Čątú, my hąpínpéy (see p. 100), is a Rąmkõ'kamekra proper and in 1930 had me initiated as tamhą'k by his tribe.

A King Vulture ought to be generous to his electors and to conform in every way to native standards of conduct. If he returns with game and meets a member of the tribe that has honored him, he deposits his spoils before him as a gift and silently departs. All tamhą'k give presents to the groups that have chosen them as courtesy chiefs. On the other hand, when people at large have killed game, the King Vultures (like the other hąmrén) share in the first portions distributed. The ideal behavior expected of a tamhą'k seems to be also imposed on his next of kin: an Indian who had deserted his wife without just cause was reminded of his son's quite recent admission to the King Vultures.

Initiation may occur at a very early age, say, from six to ten years on, so that the order includes many lads and no really old men.

The magic of this order rests on the belief that the King Vultures, especially if young and vigorous, beneficially influence activities they inaugurate and objects

[100] Nimuendajú, The Apinayé, 19 f.